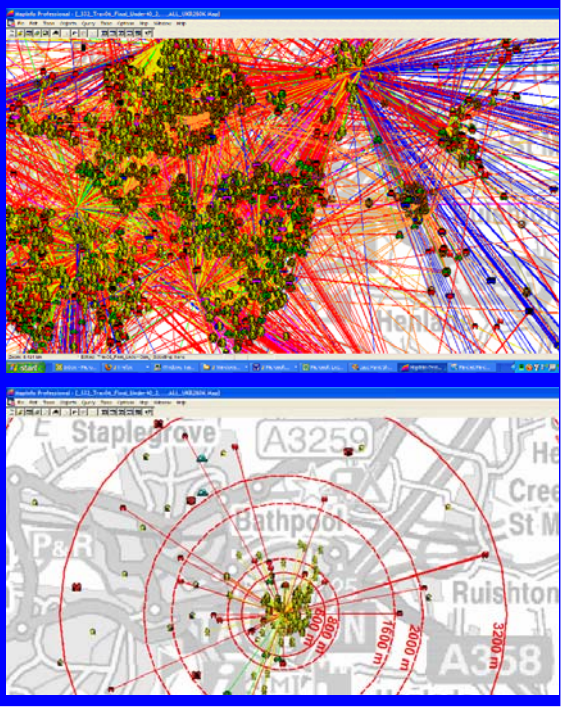
This document is one in a series about the Knowledge Mappers' Pupil Mode of Travel Geospatial Analysis Service. The service supports UK local authorities in the delivery of their Sustainable Mode of Travel Strategy, LTP3 as well as in the development and ongoing review & maintenance of School Travel Plans.

This particular document provides a summary of what people are saying about the process and its potential for achieving change. It also provides some additional support both for areas mentioned in QG1 and recent new policy developments and is arranged into the following sections:-

1. ***Testimonials***
2. ***Day to day use of the data***
3. ***Evolving policy areas to engage with***
4. ***Policy doors we struggle to open***
5. ***Some worked examples for schools scored red or amber on $C0_2$***
6. ***A reminder of the pricing structure***



1.0 What others have been saying about the STHC

It is always good to have reassurance from external sources when presenting the process to others within your authority – feel free to use these quotes

NOTE: All quotations and extracts from other documents are shown in blue

1.1 From the national leads:

"This innovative sustainable development initiative aims to provide robust data that will allow schools, planners and individuals to develop more sustainable school travel options" "Active travel to school is an important source of physical activity for young people. It could be increased further. These statistics provide a useful baseline against which to measure progress, and should be used in conjunction with a qualitative assessment of local authority and school travel policies "(page 73)

The 2009 annual report of the Chief Medical Officer

"School travel plans are only as good as the data on which they are developed. Data can be better used, as evidenced by the Dorset County Council case study (The School Travel Health Check)" "Improved data enables better targeting of activity by schools or local authorities, enhanced monitoring and benchmarking"

Towards a schools carbon management plan
The Sustainable Development Commission & DCSF
http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=985

"The connection between physical activity and good health is very clear. Children in particular need to get back to the levels of walking and cycling that prevailed in their parents' time if we are to reduce the risk of obesity. The School Travel Health Check is, in my opinion, an invaluable tool for all those interested in improving the health and wellbeing of children. It provides such crucial information that I don't see how we can do without it.

If we want to get rates of cycling and walking up to the levels of the best European communities we need to use this data to make sure our transport plans will make that happen. If we fail to take maximum advantage of this opportunity we may fail our children."

Dr Gabriel Scally
Regional Director of Public Health for the South West

1.2 On SMOTS:

"The School Travel Health Check process provides the essential foundation for development and delivery of SMOTS strategies. The STHC also frees officer time to do the important work of delivering change - Mode Shift"

Emma Sheridan

1.3 On SMOTS and STP work going forward:

"The School Travel Health Check has provided an effective and powerful means of engaging with both schools and officers within the council. The dual aspect of health and environmental impact of the school journey has enabled the team to ensure that links are made to work in school, policy decisions and cross department priorities. The STHC is proving an ideal way to re-engage with schools to help monitor and review their travel plans, without asking them to undertake additional workloads. By showing schools that the STHC is complimentary to existing work within schools we hope to continue to address unnecessary car use and raise awareness of the benefits of sustainable travel."

Sharon Payne
Regional School Travel Adviser DCSF & DfT
Sustainable School Travel Strategy Suffolk County Council

We've been really impressed with the STHC here in Sandwell. We have most of our schools with travel plans already, so this information will be invaluable for us to take the Travelling to School Initiative to the next level by actually achieving mode shift! Hopefully being able to easily target schools with the biggest potential for mode shift we should be able to get some real results.

Fleur Tooby
STA Sandwell MBC

1.4 Carbon & Calories

"A Particularly useful starting point will be to consider the school's context and its location in relation to the pupils that attend"

Ofsted Sustainable development briefing for section 5 inspectors

"The STHC processing has provided an excellent means of opening doors within my authority, particularly into the growing carbon and health agendas"

Stacey Olver
STA Plymouth City Council

The Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership and Energy Saving Trust Community Challenge awarded the STHC Highly Commended. The judges felt that "the School Travel Health Check is an excellent scheme that certainly deserves recognition and support".

http://www.lowcvp.org.uk/
http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/

1.5 The STHC contributing to traffic modelling studies, LTP3 and LAA / MAA process:

"It was extremely informative to go through the range of analysis for the schools in South East Dorset. It provided a lot of 'food for thought' for us in the development of the

transport strategies for the South East Dorset area to 2026."

"We have had to prepare the transport model from scratch and have therefore been involved in an extensive and expensive data collection programme in order to assemble a comprehensive picture of travel patterns and behaviour across South East Dorset. We were therefore delighted to learn about the journey to school data which provided a fully observed picture of travel to school by the variety of modes. The journey to school data was particularly useful in filling in gaps in the travel demand matrices for journeys by private car and public transport. The level of detail and the comprehensive nature of the data meant that it was an ideal basis to supplement the other sources of data."

"The Journey to school data was vital for us to be able to fill in the gaps between the different roadside interview sites. In other studies we have had to make simplifying assumptions about travel between the interview sites; to be able to use the Journey to School database was a real bonus for us."
Abridged comments from Robert Thompson, Business manager Policy and Plans Atkins Transport planning, commenting on the contribution the STHC has made to the South East Dorset multi modal study (underpins LTP3 and MAA).

1.6 On the reduction in burden on Officer time

"I can say from experience that trying to do this work in house, although theoretically possible, is in reality difficult, time consuming and costly. By using the STHC and packs for the schools we have saved months of work and achieved a better output."
Albert Ward
STP Team leader Somerset County Council

"The savings in cost and time that the STHC and the packs for schools bring is considerable. It has freed my time to use the STHC output to work toward the strategic change that the STHC identifies."
Ian Selby
School Travel Plans and SMOTS, Bournemouth

"This work is a rarity, a product from a small consultancy that is motivated by a desire to achieve change and not just to make money. The output is excellent and does help to achieve change. Better still it comes at a very modest price that we cannot match in house"
Kevin Speakman
School Travel Plans and SMOTS North Somerset

1.7 From the schools

I have just received our map / aerial photo and information.
I just wanted to say that this is a brilliant piece of work by you, and is extremely helpful to me.
Many thanks, and keep up the good work!
Trevor Jameson,
Headteacher, St. George's Primary School, Portland

"Great to have some measurable targets / data to use to set future targets and develop the travel plan. Fantastic maps"
Heyeswood First School
Dorset
"Fascinating detailed information, well displayed, very visual. Will use alongside STP at next review
St Josephs School
Christchurch

1.8 Authorities on board

As the list grows on a weekly basis we keep an up to date record on the website:

www.schooltravelhealthcheck.co.uk

2.0 Day to day use of the data:

Producing a list is always dangerous as they can limit creative thinking, so please see the ideas below as a 'starter for 10'; we expect you to find many more uses for the data!

NOTE: Also re-read Quick Guide 1 for ideas on using the data.

- SMOTS: The data you have here should form a major part of the foundation for your strategy.
- Work with your Planning and Admissions teams to help inform local admissions policy and highlight current levels of vehicle use and actual walk distances (they will be surprised at the gap between actual and statutory walking distances!).
- Equally use it with your Planning and Admissions team to secure space in their admissions guide for the all important 'Before you choose your school' message.
- BSF / management of the schools estate – use the spreadsheet data (and maps) to make sure that any new schools are built in the right place – putting a map on the table that shows the new school is going in the wrong location when it comes to access by sustainable modes can achieve dramatic results!
- Highways development control – you can support them both in terms of non BSF school developments but also in terms of ensuring that developments of any significance recognise the actual walk distances and that provision for sustainable modes of travel is made with theses figures in mind

2.1 Using the data to set walk and cycle thresholds and target infrastructure improvements

We all know by now that the simple stuff can be the most powerful! By placing a circle around a school set at a realistic walk or cycle distance we can present schools, parents, Members and other policy makers with a simultaneous picture of what is happening and what is realistic in terms of achieving change.

But what is a realistic threshold distance?
This data gives us the ability to test the current realistic walk thresholds of 800m and 2km.

Is the threshold distance the same as the 85 percentile distance? No – we use the 85 percentile as a measure and guide because it is
1. Understood by highway engineers and
2. It is a better measure than calculating the average distance – we want to know the distance the bulk of the pupils travel.
But the threshold distance also needs to account for any inaccuracies in the data as well as being a measure of distance that folk can understand in metric and imperial measurements! Of course you also need to translate these distances in to journey time: "800metres or a 15 min walk with young children" (remember most folk over estimate how fast they walk – go out at lunchtime for a walk, time it and then measure the route when you get back…) See how this figure relates to the speeds we are using – shown on the back page of the STHC.

So what can we use the 85 percentile for?
Once you have formed an idea of the accuracy

of your data (i.e. how many appear to be walking from a silly distance) and whether this level of accuracy is likely to change in future years as you establish positive feedback loops by pushing the data back in to schools… You can use the 85 percentile within the target setting outlined below.

2.2 Using the data to set targets

Both the map output and the Excel spreadsheets provide data which gives a sound platform for setting SMART targets for the short, medium and long term. The targets you can draw out of this data will be more refined than the current crude measures of number of schools with a STP and levels of car use.

The adoption of more sophisticated local monitoring and reporting is worthwhile on two counts:

- It enables you to set realistic and achievable targets and provides a defence if the national targets / measures cannot be achieved
- The local adoption of this more informed approach will influence the national picture in due course (mode of travel reporting within Census came out of this work)

We would recommend you consider the following as a start point when looking to set targets:

2.2.1 Short term – Number and percentage within walk threshold coming by car.

A real smarty of a target! Ok there will be some genuine reasons for short car trips, but this is your hunting ground for quick wins on modal shift. Use the data to identify the schools with high levels of car trips within the walk threshold, look at the maps for clusters or other obvious patterns (e.g. is the school cut off by a busy road without a crossing?) and then sit down with the school to discuss.

These figures are also enormously powerful in setting out the scope of what you can realistically achieve; the common assumption is that people drive because they are too busy, lazy or worried about their child's safety. The reality is that the majority of people that live within a realistic walking distance of their school do actually walk! The public and political perception is that a large percentage of the school population (say 70%) could easily shift from car to walk or cycle, whereas in reality only approximately 10% of those living within walking distance of their school come by car.

Why use percentage and numbers in the target? - Because percentages alone do not give full understanding to third party readers.

Far better to report as:
"In Anyshire of the 36,064 primary aged pupils 18,765 (or 52%) live within a realistic walking distance of their school. Out of these 18,765 pupils within walking distance 2,100 (or 11%) currently come by car."

We have yet to find anyone that is not startled by how good people are being and the limited scope for short term change!

2.2.2 Medium term – Current walk and cycle threshold distances and targets for expanding them.

The mirror on reality that the various datasets present means that significant modal shift in to the medium and long term will have to result out of a dialogue between central and local government. Local authorities can look to achieve modest change, but significant change can only come with policy support / change at the national level.

One smart target for the medium term within local control is to actively work to encourage folk to walk and cycle that little bit further.

The use of the word little is deliberate as in the world of 85% distances you will need consistent improvement across the majority of your schools in order to register as an expansion on your current walking thresholds. Now that you can accurately monitor travel to your schools beware of sweeping statements along the lines of "In three years we will double the distance children walk to school" – such statements will come back and bite you!

Consider reporting as:
"In Anyshire the current 85percentile distance for walking to primary school is 793 metres (this figure has been rounded up to 800m / half a mile to make it easier to understand). Over the next three years through a mixture of promotion and engineering we aim to extend this distance to 900m. Given that mode of travel is strongly linked to distance this seemingly modest increase will in fact be a significant achievement and will mean that an additional X thousand pupils will be walking to school"

2.2.3 Long term – More pupils attending their nearest school; - comparison between current 'Actual Distance' stats and the 'what if' tables for 'Nearest Distance Stats'.

One of the most difficult elements of long term target setting is knowing what success looks like. The great thing with this data is we can pretty much work out success down to the exact kilometre travelled or KG of CO2!

In essence what we have done is work out the nearest school each child could attend (based on academic year group) and then re-calculated the distance they would travel for their current mode – (we could also process the data with modes assigned by distance if the demand was there) This gives us the minimum possible vehicle kilometres achievable if all pupils went to their nearest school.

NOTE For the majority of the country we have to assume that a gap will remain between actual walking distance and the point when statutory transport provision begins. Even in the ideal world there will be pupils that live within this gap and without intervention from local or central government this gap is likely to be filled by the private motor car.

For London the provision of universal free transport for school age children fills this gap with the availability of a sustainable alternative!

So you could take the long term view along the lines of:
"If all primary aged children in Anyshire attended their nearest school vehicle kilometres would drop from 36,308km to 17,304km. This gives a saving of 19,004km

NOTE these figures are based on a single one way 'as the crow flies' journey. To get to a more realistic figure you could multiply by 4: **home-school-home/work** in the morning and **work/home-school-home** in the evening.

The total per week saving based on using the multiplier above is therefore 380,080 kilometres per week!

As an authority we are very much committed to maximising the potential for travel by sustainable modes and will do all we can to ensure parents consider distance and subsequent mode of travel when choosing a school for their child. We do however also encourage central government to review its preference policy, particularly the published measure of success; an increase in the distance travelled to school by less advantaged groups. The resulting 'choose

distant' policy (unintended or not) currently makes our Local Schools for Local Children policy difficult to achieve and makes the identified potential saving in vehicle kilometres impossible.

Through the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy we shall pursue a long term strategy of encouraging parents to 'Choose local' backed up by a greater focus on a spatial approach (within the central legislative and policy framework) to the delivery and management of the schools estate to ensure capacity relates to location of population. One measure of success will be the monitoring of actual vehicle kilometres against the minimum possible"

2.3 Thoughts on what to look out for on cross border study

Now here we start in to the evolving policy area that is 14 to 19 and all the associated strands.

In short we have approaching us a means of delivering education that does away with the traditional LA boundaries, instead delivering across Travel To Learn Areas (TTLA's). NOTE: Cross border movement has always taken place but in the past it has been difficult to quantify from the spatial perspective, welcomed by some and seen as a threat by others.

If we manage to engage in this process we stand to gain by ensuring that the Travel To Learn Areas are identified and developed with sustainable travel on the agenda from day one.

As ever the data we now have before us shows that the playing field within our own authorities, let alone across borders is far from level and can actively hamper opportunities for sustainable travel (Ref Dorset SMOTS, Purbeck Review and SW STA response to Select Committee documents on Dorset Viewfinder for more detail).

Below are some questions you should be asking / areas of investigation that your census data can inform

Difference between educational structures – Middles, Grammars etc.
Different school types = different patterns of travel. Which structures deliver the greatest potential for sustainable travel?

Push and pull factors these differences are likely to generate.
Is the type of provision uniform across your area or do you have a mixture of two, three tier and selective? Bournemouth TTLA has all three!

Identify schools within respective walk threshold of their borders and identify any potential savings in terms of sustainable travel arising from closer cross border work.
Is cross border work already taking place or is the 'export' of your pupils to a neighbouring authority resented?

Examine cross border capacity issues.
As above – is import / export seen as an opportunity or a threat?

Need to see / ensure that admissions packs contain a similar message regarding sustainable transport.
This is now helped by the update to SMOTS requesting words encouraging sustainable travel in all composite prospecti. But also look at your 14 to 19 offer - does this cater for the TTLA and does it encourage consideration of sustainable travel within the students' decision making process?

3.0 Current evolving policy doorways you should be pushing at.

3.1 Carbon:

What the Sustainable Development Commission says about the STHC:
(Not much to add to this really as the Sustainable Development Commission has said it all!)

"Data and monitoring
School Travel Plans are only as good as the data on which they are developed. Establishing better quality data sources to underpin School Travel
Plans could help schools and School Travel Advisors to target their activities more effectively.

It could also provide a basis for more consistent monitoring (for example, establishing a consistent method of measuring the impact of schemes, benchmarking of activities and comparison of schools and local authorities).

Improved school travel data can also link into local authority work on National Indicator 186 (Per Capita Carbon Emissions in the local authority area). In particular, it can help local authorities to better understand the impact of school travel and the opportunities for interventions.

Existing data sources can be better used (as evidenced by the Dorset County Council case study below). It is important that Regional and Local School Travel Advisers understand the data that is available to them and how it can be used and interpreted. Existing data can also be used to inform individual schools of their performance and to identify actions."

Case study - Effective data
Dorset County Council
Building on the data provided by the Schools Census, Dorset County Council has developed a spreadsheet tool which maps:
- Mode of travel by school year across the County
- Mode of travel by individual school
- Proportion of children living within an agreed walking distance of the school (0.8 KM for primary pupils, 2 KM for secondary pupils)
- Distance travelled by mode by individual school
- Carbon emissions from pupil travel for the school day and the school year by individual school (ie, how many kg carbon dioxide came from the school run at Bridport Primary School?)
- Calories burned by mode by individual school (ie, how many calories are burned by children cycling to Bridport Primary School?)

The spreadsheet feeds into a **School Travel Health Check** for each individual school which outlines how they are currently performing and opportunities for improvement action.
See www.viewfinder.infomapper.com/dorset/resources?id=951174 for further information.

Extract from the SDC / DCSF 'Towards a schools carbon management plan':
http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=985

Challenge is one thing worth mentioning when talking carbon – If you are not prepared to challenge you are in the wrong job! RAG rating schools on their $C0_2$ per head is essential. You just have to make sure you set it within a context that shows that the school

is not being blamed for the failings of others elsewhere. See section 5 to see how Dorset approaches negative reactions from the RAG rating.

3.2 Health

To repeat a quote from the testimonials page:

"The School Travel Health Check is, in my opinion, an invaluable tool for all those interested in improving the health and wellbeing of children. It provides such crucial information that I don't see how we can do without it".

Dr Gabriel Scally - Regional Director of Public Health for the South West

The STHC has really struck a chord with senior figures in Health because of the value it can bring to the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) and overall work to tackle childhood obesity.

Work is ongoing to integrate the STHC with NCMP data via the regional Public Health Observatory network as well as facilitating closer working with Healthy Schools and Healthy Schools Plus.

Whilst this work continues you do need to flag to your colleagues in health / healthy schools the information the STHC contains on the current levels of active travel and the potential for improvement.

3.2 LTP3

http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/guidance/localtransportsplans/

How the STHC can support LTP3:

The new LTP guidance provides a number of excellent linkages to the STHC and associated data processing. Although we would encourage STA's and SMOTS officers to read the whole document we have highlighted what we feel are the best linkages below:

Evidence based approach

It is important in preparing Local Transport Plans that local authorities start by determining a clear view of their own strategic goals and of their priorities for dealing with the different challenges they face. This strategic view should be based on robust evidence.

In preparing their Local Transport Plans, however, and determining arrangements for monitoring delivery, transport authorities should not confine themselves to the consideration of the targets and indicators contained in LAAs and the National Indicator Set. It is open to authorities to set themselves additional indicators and targets in their LTP wherever this is likely to be helpful in securing effective delivery, while ensuring consistency with the LAA.

Authorities may also wish to consider local targets on cycling and walking.

Collaboration between authorities may be helpful to allow opportunities for bench-marking.

Although we very much welcome NI198 and other measures we can associate with the journey to and from school we think it is fair to say that all recognise NI198 to be a particularly blunt tool. Yes it tells you where car use is above average but it does not tell you why. The spatial calculations within the STHC have been designed to illuminate the situation and to provide short, medium and long term SMART targets that work from individual pupil level up to strategic decision makers at the local, regional and national level.

We very much welcome the guidance's endorsement of the value of local monitoring and benchmarking within and between authorities. The STHC enables this activity and is already being used extensively for this purpose.

Tackle climate change

Action to move towards a low carbon transport system will be a key component in meeting our obligations under carbon budgets.

Local authorities are particularly important partners in leading change, influencing the patterns of journeys, development and promoting more sustainable choices.

DfT encourages local authorities to develop strategies and implementation plans that take significant steps towards mitigating climate change, by encouraging the development of sustainable transport systems, facilitating behaviour change and reducing the need to travel through, for example, Smarter Choices measures.

We all know the urgency of tackling carbon emissions but we all struggle with how to measure and facilitate change in a way that can be understood and adopted at all levels. We have worked to provide simple and robust measures. We see our citation as best practice within the Sustainable Development Commissions 'Towards a schools carbon management plan' as the best possible endorsement of the approach we have adopted.

The STHC makes no apologies for calculating carbon emissions on a per head basis and then Red, Amber, Green rating schools on their performance. All recognise the value of this approach even if some find it to be uncomfortable reading! Looking back to the need to have SMART targets, the STHC output makes it clear where action is required - responsibility is shared from the individual to strategic level.

Spatial planning

It is critical that transport and spatial planning are closely integrated. Both need to be considered from the outset in decisions on the location of key destinations such as housing, hospitals, schools, leisure facilities and businesses, to help reduce the need to travel and to bring environmental, health and other benefits.

The STHC focuses strongly on the spatial element. The persisting 'Tabloid thinking' surrounding the journey to and from school has masked the true driver behind high levels of car use to and from school: We are now in a situation where the majority of pupils do not attend their nearest school! The consequences of this non spatial delivery of education are plain to see.

The STHC as well as identifying the issue down to the individual school level also illustrates the possible alternatives and quantifies the potential for change.

Healthy and sustainable communities

Improve the health of individuals by encouraging and enabling more physically active travel.

Enhance well-being and sense of community by creating more opportunities for social contact and better access to leisure activities and the natural environment.

We all want Healthy, Safe and Sustainable communities. The STHC plays an important part in providing direction and monitoring this change.

NOTE: The STHC as well as measuring transport and CO_2 also measures calories burned for walking and cycling.

Driving / delivering change

Local authorities are particularly important partners in leading change, influencing the patterns of journeys, development and promoting more sustainable choices. There is still much to be done if local authorities are to make the maximum contribution to the climate change agenda, and particularly so in transport. DfT encourages local authorities to develop strategies and implementation plans that take significant steps towards mitigating climate change, by encouraging the development of sustainable transport systems,

facilitating behaviour change and reducing the need to travel through, for example, Smarter Choices measures.

'Smarter choices' for school travel has to be more than stickers! The STHC forms the foundation for an informed dialogue with the School community. Yes it challenges, but it is not unrealistic and does not seek to apportion responsibility in the wrong place. Equally it is designed to be accessible at all levels from pupil to Minister, better still it is achieving influence at both ends of the spectrum (and all points in between).

Working across borders

All local transport authorities are required to produce an LTP relating to transport to, from and within their area. In considering this duty authorities should bear in mind that patterns of transport use are not necessarily restricted by local authority boundaries. It is important that an LTP is a practical document, and where cross-boundary travel is particularly important to users, neighbouring authorities may wish to consider a joint Local Transport Plan.

In considering appropriate indicators, authorities are encouraged to discuss with other authorities, especially within their region, what standard indicator definitions may enable them and the wider transport community to benchmark their performance.

Lack of portability of local data has been the curse of many projects; School travel plans included. The STHC is portable between authorities and looks across borders. With the need for benchmarking and a move towards the provision of education based on Travel To Learn Areas, authorities can no longer operate in isolation.

Sustainable modes of travel strategy

To meet provisions in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, local authorities are required to develop a Sustainable modes of travel strategy. This involves assessing the travel and transport needs of all children and young people in their area, and considering how they need to plan their transport infrastructure to meet the needs of all pupils. In doing so, they are required to maximise the potential to promote and utilise sustainable modes of travel. It is advised the strategy is closely related to the LTP.

The STHC formed a foundation for many 'SMOTS' strategies. It is difficult to see how a SMOTS strategy can be delivered without the spatial data that the STHC contains!

Annex E

The STHC can provide a wealth of data to help meet LTP3 goals. The immediately obvious "boxes that can be ticked" from Annex E are:-

- Smarter choices options (e.g. school, workplace, and individualised travel planning, teleconferencing, teleworking, etc.)
- Public transport improvements
- Development of work place and school travel plans to reduce emissions from car journeys, improve air quality and promote health
- Improvement of public transport services to reduce congestion
- Better integration of transport and spatial planning to reduce the need to travel
- Development of inclusive transport schemes to improve walking, cycling and public transport access to key service areas
- Development and implementation of Road Safety strategies, including engineering-based schemes and education, training and publicity, particularly for vulnerable users
- Implementation of walking and cycling schemes to promote healthier life styles and CO_2 reduction.

4.0 Notes on some of the recent policy documents that are supported by the use of the STHC.

4.1 DH / DfT Active Travel Strategy (Feb 10)

http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/cycling/activetravelstrategy/

How the STHC can support the new Active Travel Strategy:

This new strategy provides a number of excellent linkages to the STHC and associated data processing. Although we would encourage STA's and SMOTS officers to read the whole document we have highlighted what we feel are the best sections below:

4.16 The information contained in school travel plans informs an authority's 'Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy' which the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires it to produce. The Strategy provides an opportunity to assess the travel and transport needs of all children and young people and to consider how transport infrastructure can be planned to meet their individual travel needs, whilst maximising the potential to promote and utilise sustainable and active modes of travel. **The publication of the Strategy summary provides the opportunity to promote sustainable travel options to parents so that they can make informed travel choices when choosing a school.**

Time for a controversial but true statement (Based on over 10 years working with School Travel Plans and the data they generate)...

The majority of STP's do not generate sufficiently robust data in a format that can be shared to make them a viable strategic resource.

This is why the STHC came about and why it is increasingly becoming the foundation and a key output for LA SMOTS strategies and summary documents.

One area that the STHC brings in to stark relief is the effect parental preference has on mode of travel – choose a school too far to walk or cycle and you are in the car. With over 50% of our school population not attending their nearest school, we welcome DH & DfT's support for properly informed travel choice. The STHC provides both the 'you are here' and the 'what success could look like' for the move towards parents taking greater consideration of travel in their choice of school. We are happy to provide support in the area of pre-choice messaging to parents.

6.5 National indicators, however, are not always suitable for monitoring changes at a local level – indeed in the NTS cycling can only be estimated at a regional level, and walking at the sub-regional level. As most action is taken at a local level, it is also important that cycling and walking are monitored at the local level. Data on mode of travel to school is already collected annually as part of the School Census and gives a very detailed level of information on how children travel to school. However, even here, authorities need to work with schools to improve the standard of data collected so that maximum use can be made of this.

The STHC is already recognised as a best practice means of processing and displaying school census data. One of the underlying principles behind the STHC is to create a direct positive feedback loop with schools to ensure that schools fully engage with the process and strive to ensure the best possible standards of data collection. There is clear evidence to show that the STHC delivers this –recording of modes as 'unknown', 'other' as well as miscoding and 'flood filling' show a marked decline as soon as the STHC packs hit the schools. The STHC output contains a spreadsheet that allows you to monitor this improvement within and against other authorities

6.6 And ultimately, we want to see the link made between active travel and Local Area Agreements. We know that walking and cycling can contribute to a wide range of indicators, but in a world where resources are becoming increasingly stretched it is important that you have the information you need to make a robust case for investment.
The STHC and associated short medium and long term targets provide a truly 'SMART' way forward. They also provide 'crossover targets' that provide linkages from the transport element of the LAA to Health and Co2. With the STHC you have the ability to work at the strategic level as well as the resource to 'drill down' to the individual school level.
NOTE: We want to achieve change and have a wealth of strategic and local experience – we are happy to provide pointers and support for best use of the STHC data.

6.7 It is important, therefore, that authorities develop a robust local monitoring and evaluation framework. This will help in both monitoring the delivery of the programme, but crucially also with demonstrating the impacts of the programme on wider corporate objectives.
The lack of robust monitoring affects many areas of LA working and has been a particular frustration with the School Travel Plan and walking and cycling agendas. There has been a real tendency in the absence of solid data to build assumption upon assumption, throw in some emotion and call it reality. The STHC cuts through all this:

- We have origin, destination and mode.
- We have output that creates a positive feedback loop with those collecting the data.
- The output is accessible / understandable to all.
- It holds up a clear and accurate mirror on school travel.
- It provides a route forward broken down in to logical and palatable chunks.

4.2 DH Chief Medical Officers report (March 10)

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/AnnualReports/DH_113912

It is rare to be inspired by reports nowadays – this one is an exception!

Read the following sections:

- On the state of public health
- Moving to natures cure
- Grandparenting for health
- Climate change and health

Above all read p73 - The SW entry in the regions section!

Well considered and 'un spun' common sense throughout!

This report provides a far wider context for active travel work than current health initiatives such as Healthy Schools – just following the HS programme will not deliver against the level of ambition set out in this report, so make sure your colleagues realise that there is more to be done than just ticking the HS box.

NOTE This is not a negative comment on the excellent Healthy Schools programme, we just need to be aware that we need to be working more widely in order to deliver the ambitions of this report.

4.3 Government response to Yellow School Bus Commission report and recommendations (March 10)

http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/schooltravel/yellowschoolbus/

This document illustrates the potential for the STHC to illuminate the continuing gap between assumption and reality.

As the STHC based commentary is best read when included within the government's response please look at the Mode Shift response to this document at

The very quick summary is that by using the STHC you can quickly establish what a realistic walking (and cycling) distance is. Yes it is probably unaffordable to reduce the statutory school transport provision distances, but there must be clarity in why these distances are retained – maintain them for financial reasons = fine. Pretend that you are keeping them because of a significant potential for modal shift = not fine – all the data says that this is unrealistic.

4.4 DCSF Climate change and schools, A carbon management strategy for the schools sector (March 10)

http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00366-2010&

This document represents somewhat of a mixed bag and in our opinion a bit of a dilution from the original Sustainable Development Commission publication.

Areas that we welcome are (respective paragraph numbers are shown in brackets – page nos are shown with a p):

- The recognition that the third and private sector (where the STHC fits in) have a part to play in promoting sustainable travel options (2)
- Good ambition for the reduction of transport emissions and flagging of the need to tackle – the short term STHC target - car within walk threshold (10)
- Identifying the need for raising awareness amongst staff pupils and parents (15)
- Recognition that "in most cases, local authorities are the local hub of expertise on sustainable travel" (40) – you have the STHC – make use of it!
- "We suggest that local authorities: Promote active and sustainable travel through the planning framework. Promote active travel directly. Use schools data to incentivise action. Provide information to parents.(P34 - 6)" Masses of links to the STHC, page 36 in particular – make sure you read this section!
- "Promoting informed choice. We will ask local authorities to ensure that all parents routinely receive information on options for home to school travel when considering schools. This information should promote sustainable travel options and their corresponding benefits, so that parents are better informed of these benefits when applying for school places" (p45) Result! Make sure evidence from your STHC is used to inform your message.

Areas that cause concern:

- The retreat to using the National Travel Survey (NTS) for calculating the transport footprint is a real worry (Page 13) especially as the recent DH & DFT Active travel strategy highlight the limitations of NTS and encourages more detailed school census based calculations!
- The retreat to tabloid thinking (P24 2nd bullet), stranger danger etc is a bit poor, given that evidence from the STHC and STP's clearly shows that the majority living within a realistic distance do walk or cycle.

- Bit of a cop out on the impact of choice (61) all the data shows that the upward curve in car use corresponded with the introduction of parental preference. At least pupil KM's will now be monitored (of course we are already doing this in grester detail in the STHC!)

NOTE Although implied within the document, DCSF will not be supplying Pupil or school level data, so if you want the detail you need, you need the STHC!

4.5 DfT Transport Carbon Reduction Delivery Plan (March 10)

http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/climatechangeplans/

http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/climatechangeplans/pdf/delivery-plan.pdf

At 92 pages this is a beast! As with all things local authorities tend to respond when told to measure something (even if the measure is crude and requires local input to give it meaning – NI198 has little meaning till it is backed up by STHC data)... So for the quick read go to Annex A page 83 and start reading from there.

From a skim through the pages leading up to Annex A:

Good to see the concept of carbon budgets being raised in the Transport Carbon Reduction Delivery Plan. Provides a good opportunity to promote accessible personal carbon budgeting schemes: http://www.fairsharesfairchoice.com/

Good also to see smarter choices figuring prominently in their transport indicator pyramid. Evens mentions spatial planning - but I think we need to do work to define the sort of spatial planning we need! There is an unfortunate fixation on new build – The process of making sure services are provided as close to users as possible tends to be overlooked.

Good to see some spatial analysis for school travel finally creeping in:
Table 5.7 Indicator: **Distance from home to school for all users of same travel mode**, per 100 pupils

This is another measure that supports the pre choice 'Child Miles' message.

One limitation is that it is going to be taken from the National Travel Survey (NTS) – sample size = 8000 households - 19,000 individuals.
The recent DH & DfT Active Travel Strategy has highlighted (section 6) the weakness of the NTS when it comes to walk and cycle data BUT we can also point to the Active Travel Strategy which encourages LA's to achieve greater accuracy by using School Census... For Dorset alone we have 54,000 records per year to work with and can use the standard output from the STHC to give a far greater degree of accuracy.

Level 2 cycle training is good to see as an indicator, but it is another thing that takes the eye away from walking. We all need to keep highlighting the need to tackle car trips within walk threshold – in the majority the shift is from car to walk!

Finally, carbon is a hot topic and a lot of people are scratching their heads over how to measure it. Many will be bowled over when you show them the detail achieved within the STHC, so make sure all your carbon people know about it!

5.0 Policy doors that we all struggle to open, but need to keep knocking on none the less.

5.1 AMP

Or to give them their full title: Asset Management Plans. Use the STHC mapping to identify the best locations for walking and cycling infrastructure. Then try your best to get some form of long term commitment for maintenance of any provision you make on school sites. Why? Because much of the cycle parking that has gone in through the STP process has been to replace old storage that was never maintained because maintenance was never written in to the AMP...

5.2 Building Bulletins

A particular bugbear as they still promote outdated standards in terms of access by car. For new sites use the STHC output to ensure that the school is built in the right place. Unfortunately the blindingly obvious is often overlooked!

For works to existing sites use the STHC and the schools RAG rating in particular to examine and argue for restraint on vehicles accessing and parking on the site.

Always be prepared to quote from **School Travel Plans and the Planning Process – First Principles for Schools and Sustainable Travel** it has the following to say about building bulletins:

"They are non-statutory recommendations only and there is no legal basis for using them. They should therefore be read in conjunction with the higher order transport policy documents"

5.3 Teachers not walking the area around their school

A simple fact to remember – the majority of teachers have never walked the roads that fall within the realistic walking threshold of their school!

Use the STHC to get teachers out walking in this zone. School Travel Plans become far more realistic when this happens!

5.4Pre choice messages:

- **'Child miles'**
- **'Love living local'**
- **Personal carbon budgets**

One of the biggest messages the STHC gives is that if folk live within a realistic walking distance of their chosen school there is a very good chance that they will already be walking. Equally if they are not currently walking we have a fighting chance of getting them out of their cars!

So use the STHC to support your work in getting to folk before they choose a school that is too far away to make walking (or cycling) a realistic option.

Remember you are pushing at an open door – parents want 'A good school locally'. The STHC supports you in arguing for this.

ANNEX 1:

Some worked examples for schools scored red or amber on CO_2.

Below you will find two email chains responding to schools that have raised issues with being scored amber or red within the STHC

Given that the most uncomfortable (but essential) part of our role is to challenge, these real world examples may help

Where original correspondence is available it sits as blue text in front of the response given.

In order to enable these real examples to be shared for illustrative purposes names and locations have been changed.

Feel free to take ideas!

Primary (Amber):
Possibly a good one to form the basis for a training session!
Note, how that despite claiming that the 'information supplied was without meaning' the Governor has picked up on all the key messages within the STHC:

- Car within walk threshold
- Pupils living within walk threshold
- Pupils not attending their nearest school
- Examination of current modes

From this they have come to the conclusion that car share is the only realistic option, which is fair enough for a school in this situation!

Key phrases extracted from Heads cover letter:
"It would appear that your statistics do not take account of the number of children who cannot walk to school because of distance from home"

"Many of the schools scored in the red category are village schools where children have to be driven because of distance"

Governor's letter:
This document places Dimple School in the Amber category with regard to the 'greenness' of our travel to school.

I have taken a short look at this and consider this to be grossly misleading for the following reasons.

Only just over 16% of those children living within the walking threshold travel by car one of the lowest figures on the chart.

Dimple Primary School has one of the largest percentages of children living outside of the reasonable walk to school circle which when combined with one of the highest percentages of children not attending their nearest school makes for a high percentage needing to travel for motorised transport.

The school bus travels in the Watery Valley. Very few children attend the school from that location. The highest percentage of children attending the school travel from Handford.

a. Handford is well beyond the yellow circle drawn on the map.

b. No school or other bus service is provided for children attending Dimple Primary School.

c. Car share would at present be the only practical advance possible.

To give a true designation one would need to order by the co-relation between percentage not attending their nearest school and those walking to school. Taking account by means of weighting degree of urbanisation and availability of public transport.

Otherwise the information supplied is without meaning.

Othertown School has a higher percentage of children within walking distance travelling by car yet has a green designation.

The School Travel Health Check could supply meaningful data for a start.

Response:
The Head Teacher
Dimple Primary School

Dear Head teacher and Governor (sorry name not supplied)

RE School Travel Health Check

Looking to the issues raised within your letter they need to be looked at in the local, regional and national context and as a consequence also in the short, medium and long term.

Dorset County Council is charged through the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as well as the wider targets for reducing car use and CO_2) to examine travel to school with a view to identifying and providing a support and challenge role to schools and policy makers in order to achieve a shift away from single occupancy car use for the journey to and from school.

Of course this has to be delivered through an existing framework of often conflicting local and national policy instruments!

Support and challenge on a local, regional and national basis is never easy. Equally the choice of measures and methods of display are not undertaken lightly.

Looking to your school in particular it is great to see that all bar 7 of your 43 pupils living within a realistic walk threshold of the school walk. This is a healthy figure and I am sure you will be able to persuade the 7 coming by car to consider shifting mode through your School Travel Plan. This ties in with the suggested short term target on page 4 of the Health Check.

Beyond the settlement of Dimple itself we see a prime example of existing policy at the local and national level impacting on the task of reducing car use. Dimple is obviously a popular school and as a consequence of this and the policy of parental preference we see pupils being drawn to your school from within a realistic walk threshold of a school closer to their home.

For Handford in particular, of the 75 living in Handford but attending Dimple, the majority live within a realistic walking distance of a Handford school. From the sustainable travel perspective the ideal situation would be for those pupils to walk to their local school.

Clearly this is where we step in to the regional / national sphere and the medium to long term. If governments are serious about addressing issues of CO_2 and single occupancy car use, such conflict does first need to be highlighted and then addressed. Part of the purpose of the Health Check is to

highlight this conflict, but also to provide the resource and guidance to show what issues fall within the immediate remit of the school and what needs to be addressed at the higher level.

We cannot shy away from our obligations and the consequences of policy decisions elsewhere. The Health Check takes us beyond the default 'Tabloid thinking' position that car use on the school run is a result of 'lazy mums in 4 by 4's' and to a position where the real causes and consequences are clear. Yes this can be uncomfortable reading as it does challenge the current non-spatial delivery of education that the preference agenda has established but equally it moves us away from 'school bashing' toward a more strategic view.

I am more than happy to discuss further. My direct contact details are below.

Yours Sincerely

DCC Sustainable Travel Coordinator

Special School (Red):
From: Deputy Head
Dear SMOTS Officer

Thank you for your recent documentation concerning our school travel health check.

It was with somewhat dismay that we have been unequivocally labelled as a 'red' school. Surely such a designation has to be made with reference to the individual characteristics of each setting.

As you may be aware, Wyvern is a school for children with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties, and as such only a tiny proportion of the population would ever be able to make their own way to school, with or without another adult in supervision.

Combining this with the fact that our catchment area naturally covers a very wide area it is clear that we are never going to anything other than red.

Notwithstanding this, we do appreciate that there are always measures that we can work towards and encourage. For example, we currently have one pupil walking home some days, with 2 members of staff, and in the past we have had a pupil living at the local respite home who has walked in to school, again with 2 members of staff.

We fully support the concept of reducing carbon footprints, clearly.
However, we would request that such a blunt measure which does not take our special circumstances into consideration is very unhelpful and could be viewed as rather insulting. Would you be able to review the way in which you carry out this type of report in future? We would naturally be open to any other suggestions that you may have for reducing our impact on the environment.

Thanks,
Deputy Head

Reply:
Deputy Head

Support and challenge on a local regional and national basis is never easy! Equally the choice of measures and methods of display are not undertaken lightly.

Starting with the national level we have many good words on health, CO_2 reduction and sustainable travel in general. But we also have many policy conflicts. In the mainstream education sector the pull between choice and sustainable travel is a biggie!

Coming down to a regional and local level we are tasked with turning these conflicting

policies in to action on the ground, often with neighbouring authorities taking different, if not opposite approaches to the same issue.

So how to make sense of all this in terms of delivering against the statutory duty to promote sustainable travel and address the very challenging CO_2 reduction targets we have to achieve if we are to have anything worthwhile to pass on to the future?

What we have tried to do with the data processing that leads to the School Travel Health Check is:

1. Be as honest and dispassionate as possible
2. Highlight the biggest issue facing us all (CO_2)
3. Develop measures that work for all schools and still retain meaning at the regional and national levels.
4. Provide sufficient additional information to highlight where the real problems sit
5. Enable local SMART target setting

So, yes you score as red in terms of CO_2, but not as high as other
Special schools – Why is that? Does this data give us any clues towards more sustainable provision of service?

But with only three students within an able bodied walk threshold and no car use from within walk threshold you are safe from any short or medium term 'hit list' (ref the suggested targets within the Health Check).

Your presence on the list however means that transport and CO_2 issues are flagged can be considered from a national to local level:

- What is the condition of the vehicle fleet?
- Can CO_2 savings be made through vehicle upgrade or better utilisation?
- If transport is maximised what about the buildings, could investment bring savings?
- How do staff get to work – savings possible?

So to conclude you have my unreserved apologies that you have found the School Travel Health Check, the per pupil CO_2 measure in particular a rather blunt measure. We do have to continue with this process, but please do take my assurance that this is only one of a suite of measures to challenge and provide pathways to achieve positive change.

Kindest regards
DCC Sustainable Travel Co-ordinator

ANNEX 2:

A reminder of the pricing structure

Thankfully the $64,000 question comes in at a lot less than $64,000!

Note
Advance invoicing can easily be arranged to meet budget-spending deadlines This is often necessary as the pupil census data is usually not released for analysis by the LEA admin team until the end of February (use it or lose it!).

6.1 Standard Pricing Structure

We have a transparent pricing structure for the "Standard Analysis Output Service", comprising 3 components, as outlined in the table below :-

Component	Charge
LEA Standing Charge	£1,500 per LEA
School Component	£10 per school *(1)*
Pupil Component	£0.01 per pupil record *(2)*

(1) - as identified in the school gazetteer file supplied to us
(2) - as identified in the school census extract data sent to us

6.2 Additional Services

Current prices for additional services are shown in the table below:-

Service	Charge
Production & Distribution of "School Travel Health Check Packs"	£25 + VAT per school + Postage & Packaging *Note we cannot produce packs on an individual school basis- minimum order = 30 packs*
Time based services	£500 + VAT per man-day (or part thereof) + Expenses

Note
Prices for other products & services and formal, written quotations are available on request.